



March 27, 2006

Mr. Kevin J. Martin
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Docket No. 05-311.

Dear Chairman Martin:

On behalf of the Video Access Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting policies that encourage rapid deployment of innovative new video platforms, I am writing in re: Docket No. 05-311. I would ask that these remarks be filed for consideration and public review.

Our organization serves as an advocacy and advisory group for independent, emerging and minority networks, content providers, programmers, entertainers and other industry participants. We recognize that, although America is a "melting pot" of cultures and heritages, television programming fails to reflect America's diversity. Independent and minority networks are all but locked out of existing video platforms. Consumers – especially minority communities – deserve more choice in television and entertainment.

The Video Access Alliance was created to address the growing concern that independent emerging and minority networks, programmers and other content providers do not have adequate means of distributing their products to consumers.

We urge you to support reform of the video franchise regulations because it is the most effective vehicle to encourage multiple platforms for delivering programming, support emerging and independent networks seeking outlets for programming and eliminate regulatory barriers that hinder competition, innovation and greater consumer choice.

When we address this issue, we are not taking a stand for or against cable companies, or for or against phone companies. We would like to see all of

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these companies, as well as new companies, expand their video networks as quickly as possible. We believe we are on the consumer's side. We believe we are on the entrepreneur's side. We believe we are on the side of economic development for our communities. We believe that all consumers, particularly minorities have the most to gain from our advocacy.

The best way to ensure networks are built is to let the markets work. Given the fact that minority consumers have enormous buying power, the Alliance believes that minority consumers will be particularly attractive to new entrants in the video distribution marketplace. Studies have shown that Hispanics and African Americans spend more on media products and services than do non-minorities. Therefore, the Alliance believes that a market driven solution is the right solution to redlining fears. Otherwise you are in a position of trying to legislate and mandate a solution for a problem that doesn't exist, and inadvertently create barriers to the deployment of new and expanded video networks.

Innovative broadband technology has transformed cable television into an integrated communications package that provides users with a tremendous tool in education, business, healthcare, security and other fields. We must eliminate regulations that serve as a barrier to competition in order to accelerate broadband deployment in minority and traditionally disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Along with other coalition members of the Video Access Alliance, I would be glad to meet with you and other commissioners to discuss this vital issue. In the meantime, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Very truly yours,

Julia Johnson
Chairperson